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Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Chief of Special Commission's Regional headquarters in Bahrain meets with Iraqi authorities in Baghdad on standoff situation, as inspectors wait to get access to Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

+ Security Council President says Council will convene on situation in South Africa on 15 July; seven to nine African Foreign Ministers expected to participate.

+ Funding of development activities comes under spotlight as Economic and Social Council continues with high level segment of session.

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Rolf Ekeus, the Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament told correspondents today that the inspection team which has been denied access to the building of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Baghdad since Sunday, 5 July, was still waiting for permission to enter.

The Commission had sent Douglas Englund, the Chief of its Regional Headquarters in Bahrain, to Baghdad to try and solve the situation with the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Ekeus emphasized that Mr. Englund had been instructed "not to negotiate", because it was "an absolute obligation" on the part of Iraq to allow United Nations inspectors free access to its facilities, according to resolution 687 (1991) and 707 (1991). However, Mr. Ekeus expressed hope that Mr. Englund could work out the modalities enabling the inspection team to enter the building tomorrow. He called the situation "a matter of principle" and said it was "an absolute challenge to the Security Council". He expressed regret about the current situation, saying that a positive momentum had existed before the incident.

The Commission suspects Iraqi authorities to have stored inside the building documents relevant to various weapon categories, in particular ballistic missiles material, as well as information on military suppliers.

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The President of the Security Council, José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde), told reporters last night that the Council was expected to convene on the question of South Africa on 15 July. Speaking after the Secretary-General had briefed the Council on talks he held last week on the situation in South Africa, the Council President said that "due to the importance that Africans attach to this problem", seven to nine African foreign ministers were expected to participate in the debate.

A formal meeting of the Council on this issue has also been requested by the Chargé d'affaires of Madagascar on behalf of the African Group. The request was made in the context of a resolution adopted at last week's meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), expressing concern about the escalation of violence in South Africa and the breakdown in the talks on the transitional process leading to a non-racist democracy in that country.

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The funding of operational activities came under the spotlight this morning as the Economic and Social Council continued with the high level segment of its 1992 session. Additional resources for development projects were urgently required, Nafis Sadik, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, told the meeting. It was particularly important, she stressed, that that funding be more secure, to allow more stable programming and to decrease the time and effort devoted to fund-raising.

William H. Draper, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, said that it made no sense to go through a painful modernization of the United Nations development system without ensuring adequate resources to carry out this undertaking. To be effective, the system required predictable and significantly increased multi-year resource flows. The United Nations development system had a crucial role to play, but it could only function efficiently if it was given the structure, the governance and the means to do so.

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